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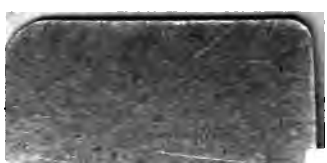

DESCRIPTIVE POEMS,

BY

JOHN D. M'KINNON.

CONTAINING

Picturesque Views

OF THE

STATE OF NEW-YORK.

NEW-YORK:
Printed by *T. & J. SWORDS*, No. 99 Pearl-Street.

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IT was the desire of the Author to have rendered the following Poems more worthy of publication, by an extension of them at his leisure. The novelty of the subjects, and the approbation of the Author's friends (certainly his principal incentive to the composition), afforded strong inducements to enlarge on what he had begun. But the very confined views which the country in its uncleared state afforded beyond the German-Flats, rendered it but little susceptible of poetical description, without a constant recurrence of similar images. In offering this short performance to the public, he has the satisfaction to think that if he is not so fortunate as to amuse, he cannot much fatigue his readers.

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THE HUDSON.

ARGUMENT.

Invocation of the Muse—Departure from New-York —Scenery of the Banks on both Sides of the River near the City—Rocks on the Shore opposite to Philipsburg—The Tappaan-Sea—Haverstraw-Bay —Evening—Moon-Light—The Highlands—West-Point—New-Windsor—Newburgh—Poughkeepsie —Rhinebeck—Blue Mountains—Clermont—Hudson—Albany.

THE HUDSON.

MUTE are thy Doric Swains—thy Tempe, Muse,
Enslav'd, and over-grown with weeds: Come scent
The wild perfume of transatlantic pines,
The lilies of the misty Mohawk's vales,
And trace the Hudson's quarried course thro' woods
And shelving steeps romantic, where he pours
The volume of his stately waters. June
Auspicious, with her azure smiles, has sooth'd
The deep, and with the balmy south expands
The rising sail. Do thou benign inspire,
While, wafted thro' its channel, I depict
The Hudson's shores. Borne from the city's smoke,
Putrescent docks, and ever-toiling crowds
Commercial, murm'ring on the sultry wharves,
How all the soul expands with new-felt life!

What bright, ethereal gladness sparkles round
The fluctuating bows! How taste the lungs
The chaste, elastic, rural air, breathing
A redolent and genial summer's glow!
Now gliding by the tranquil shore, its meads
And verdant landscapes charm the eye; the bays
That strive to insulate some sylvan knowle;
The woodland slopes half cultivated; seats
Embosom'd in their groves upon the hills;
And sedgy meadows, varigated oft
By rancid brine. Hence onward as we sail,
The towering strata of embattled rocks,
O'er wooded steeps, in precipices hang,
As if some shock of elemental war
Had rent their indurated mass of stone
To give old Hudson passage; and afar,
High-storied to the Tappaan coast, extends
The range of hoary cliffs impending o'er

The sails diminutive, that shaded pass
Beneath their silent grandeur. Opening there,
An *inland ocean** far expands; and capes
Hesperian, jutting on the azure deep,
Confront a length of slope, whose cultur'd face,
Proclivous on the east, with rich expanse
Of fields and orchards, smiles along the shore.
Now whitening o'er the level bay, the south
Auspicious freshens, till the bright-orb'd sun
A milder majesty assumes, and sheds
A soften'd lustre on the glist'ning waves.
Impatient Fancy wings us on our course:
From right to left the swelling top-sail reels
Above the roaring surge. By *Croton*'s† stream
And promontory's sylvan length we pass,
Tracing a line of foam along the coast,

* The Tappaan Sea.

† Croton River, which enters the Hudson about 40 miles from New-York.

Till in our front the growing Highlands rise,
In grand perspective hung across the bay,
And steept in hazy distance; while the sun
Upon their summits sinks his fulgid orb,
Immers'd within a crimson mist. The breeze,
That, like the halcyon morning of this life,
So fairly promis'd, whispering lulls, then sleeps
Upon the tide, and soon it is become
One mirror's face, where the vermilion sky
Sees all its new-born twinkling stars, and round
The peaceful shores the woods in darkness wrapt,
And mansions whitening on the strand. Aside
The mount of *Stony-Point*, with summit scar'd
By deep entrenchments, swung our vessel rests,
With main-sail drooping on her deck; and now
The moon unveil'd behind the dewy shades
Of night, a morn rekindles o'er the woods
And silver-crested capes. Upon the scene,

And all the changes of this passing world,
How pleasing then to meditate, and trace
The wonders of futurity!—The eyes
But lately clos'd,* of him who ranging first
This region's wild, his enterprising name
Upon the liquid stream impress'd, and, borne
Within its soaring mountains, saw one still
And solemn desert, in primeval garb,
Hang round his lonely bark. Upon the shores
What necromantic change has culture wrought!
Six cycles' suns, in revolution, since
Have scarcely smil'd upon the virgin glebe,
When Plenty sprung from European strength,
And tutor'd Industry adorns the waste.
The vales are furrow'd; population climbs

* Hudson, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, first entered the harbour of New-York. He sailed up the river (now bearing his name) from *Manahata*, or York Island, as far as Albany. See *Belknap's Amer. Biog. vol.* i. *p.* 399.

The mountain's rugged sides; the frequent church
Or court-house rises on the hill, whose base
Is made the seat of Commerce. Fancy, still
Anticipating Time, his future works
Delights to paint, where distant years shall see
The smoky marts of Hudson's opulence
And navied wharves—unsculptur'd rocks, which then
May line, with colonnades of lucid quartz,
And feldspars polish'd tints, the peopled streets
Of cities yet unborn, or raise the spire,
Or swell the temple's sacred dome rotund.
Nor these illusive phantasies or vain
Poetic dreams—atchiev'd the proudest work—
Maternal Freedom warms the genial soil,
And nerves the arm of Labour—pure, benign,
Invigorating as th' autumnal west.

Now meeting the pure breath of morn, and borne
Within the steep projecting Highlands ridge,

The prospect rises round. Gigantic, vast,
O'ershadowing mountains soar, invested thick
Their shaggy waists, and to their summits far
A wilderness unbounded to the eye,
Profuse and pathless, unsubdued by toil.
Diminutive beneath, the Hudson, deep
Coerc'd by rocks, and silent, penetrates
The solitudinous and woodland scene;
His former course disorder'd, winding through
Uncertain, struggling for a passage. Far
Within the lofty desert we behold
The Fort,* and thund'ring cannon on its brow,
Rais'd on the western rocks, where trav'llers long
The base and vain design that had betray'd
Columbia shall relate. Here one while steep,
In cliffs, and perpendicular, the shore

* West Point.

Sublime, abrupt its craggy front exalts,
And blackens o'er the tide: then low at first,
And rising from the naked granite banks,
A sunny length of wood, out-stretch'd from hill
To hill, light undulating o'er the yoke
Of distant mountains, swells into the skies.
Toward the open plains, emerging through
The barrier hills, we coast *New-Windsor*'s docks,
And *Newburgh*, smiling on the shadowy bulk
Of mountains. On the strand the vessels pile,
And timber-texture echoes to the stroke
Of plying toil; while on we move, 'twixt hills
On either shore, with cedars wildly set
In interstitial veins of rocks and oaks,
Enamour'd of the heights or chesnut woods,
And aromatic sassafras hung o'er
The spacious stream. And now Poughkeepsie's stores
And arduous dwellings front the Hudson's cliffs,

Oft channell'd by precipitated firs
And groaning trunks of timber, till we turn
Towards the west; and, gliding round the sedge
On *Rhinebeck*'s marsh, behold the distant range
Of insulated mountains towering o'er
Esopus' plains in blue perspective grand;
Recalling to the traveller's mind such noble scenes
As those survey, who, from the glowing vales
Of Piedmont, o'er Mount Bernard's hoary brows,
Pass northward to the Rhine's contested shores;
While frequent o'er th' ensanguin'd granite rocks
The path aërial hangs, or sudden sunk
Into th' abyss of vale, suspended leaves
The towering canton in the clouds. The grapes
Here drink the saccharine empurpling beams
Of summer; here a frosty winter reigns
Upon the conic hills of snow, that chill
The smiling sky with hyperborean lights.

Approaching as we range the fragrant groves
And *Clermont*'s halls,* in elevation broad,
And sylvan majesty, the mountains screen
The west, and shift, with varying lights and shades,
Their grand, imposing scenery. Now they melt
In distance, as between the rising smoke
On *Hudson*'s mount and rival *Lunenburg*
We glide still northward. On the verdant shore
Industrious scenes succeed. Some mansion white,
Or ruddy-fac'd, at intervals we pass;
The farm within th' umbrageous orchard hid,
Or neat impal'd; the new-built yellow cot
Emerging from the wood; half-structur'd roofs,
And dwellings windowless; till pausing where
The weary'd Hudson dropt his anchor,† we repose.

* Seats of the family of Livingston. † Albany.

Reflection. v. 168.

Thrice happy change, by what mysterious power
Of Fancy's necromantic art dost thou impel
Th' unconscious soul to bliss! The scenes so priz'd
In distance, when attain'd, derive new charms
From those we leave, by retrospect endear'd,
And grown more soft and lovely by the lapse
Of intervening space. But onward still,
While Novelty invites, Hope beck'ning smiles.

THE MOHAWK.

ARGUMENT.

Departure from Albany—The Cahoos Falls—General Character of the Scenery on the Mohawk River—Schenectady—Historical Notice of the Aborigines—Tripe's Hill—Canajohary—Palatine—The Little-Falls—Theoretical View of the Formation of the Earth—German-Flats—and a general View of the Country, as yet imperfectly settled.

THE MOHAWK.

The morn now glittering on the sandy brows
Of *Alba*'s sloping city, westward spreads
A canopy of azure o'er the woods
And smiling lakes. The *Mohawk*'s Falls we seek;
And, turning to the rich and fragrant vales
That westward wind, approach the fractured steep,
In hoarse and silver fountains, where he pours
His urn amongst the far-resounding rocks.
Let Science tell the mighty cause that erst
The mountain fabric's horizontal base
Upturning, gave the roaring waters vent
Along their lacerated bed, slate-pav'd,
And branching to the Hudson; while the Muse,
With humbler views, the cataract admires,

In streams of foam, where, glancing down
The precipice, it widens to a gulf,
And amphitheatre of quarried rocks,
Their sylvan brows with spiral cedars set
Or coppice crown'd; and, issuing thro' the vale,
With pleasing murmur steals along the shrubs
And shadowy elms.—Here, where the Mohawk gaz'd
And wonder'd at th' abode vortaginous
Of his tremendous father, in the rocks
And flood impassable, see Art pervades
E'en Nature's ruins, with aspiring hand
Stretch'd o'er the torrent's foam, the rifted banks
Uniting, with such works as Rome, when thron'd
On nations, wrought. Across a giddy pile
Of wood* the horseman now pursues his way,
Succeeded by the length'ning herd and swains

* Alluding to the bridge over the river, below the Cahoos Falls, 900 feet in length.

In slow procession, while beneath them roars
The headlong river. Leaving now the Falls,
With all their grander lineaments, behind,
We pass along the peaceful Mohawk's shore,
And trace the vale where'er the fruitful stream,
Meand'ring from the west, the distant hills
Receding designate. In front a width
Of richest intervale, our champaign route,
Within the smiling scenes of husbandry,
Far westward leads. Beneath its willowy banks
The fertilizing stream glides down the vale,
Now intersecting in an equal course, and now
Inclining to the north; now south it laves
The sidelong hills' ascent; then winding off,
Sleeps, high embower'd, within the spreading growth
Of pensive elms that tow'r luxuriant o'er
The elders, and with hanging plane trees mix
Their graceful limbs and interwoven shade.

As frequent thus the silent stream escapes
The traveller's eye incurious, while it lurks
In silence by, hoarse murmurs wake his ear
At intervals, as o'er the rapid shoals
Th' obstructed water fluctuating shoots
Among the broken rocks. The antique fronts
We gain, wrapt in Batavian gloom of sheds
And intermingled trees, where *Corlear** first,
Advancing from the sandy desert, fix'd
His dwelling on the margin of the still
And sable river. Academic Peace
And Meditation now consign the spot
To future Science. Here the dusty road
Forsaking for the verdant turf, we scent
The fragrance of the evening, and survey
The shore, enamour'd of its pensive scenes,

* Schenectady.

Harmonious, tranquil, which thy genius, CLAUDE,
Taught by the sober Fancies, had confest her own.
Amidst the shade suspended o'er the vale,
The mirror of the Mohawk's tide reflects
A varied tapestry: the vivid green
Of willows interwoven—the plane trees hoar
And dappled waist—the pensive, sombre elm,
Queen of the Flats, her hanging robes diffuse
And graceful. Fronting in perspective dim,
A range of mountain, from the *Kaatskill's* loins
Projected, in a promontory falls
Sublime in distant grandeur on the shore;
While thro' its horizontal firs, the west,
Still beaming with effulgence, dyes the stream
With ardent yellow. Night, contemplative,
Now drops her veil. How pleasing 'tis to trace,
Upon the map of Time, the varied scenes
Of this revolving world; some nearly lost

In dim Oblivion's haze—some living yet
Upon the tablet of the Memory—
And some in letter'd annals of the past!
The Flats, that stretching west, in native soils,
Spontaneous verdure yield their rich increase.
Of yellow harvests to the spacious barns,
Embosom'd in their orchards, lately hung
With shade, sustain'd a sullen growth of wood,
And thro' th' unchronicled domain of Day
Lay in tranquillity and solitude;
Till first the roving Huron* glanc'd across,
Quick as his arrow that pursu'd the deer;
And, hailing in the lonely chace his devious mate,
With shoutings wild, beside *Scoharie*'s brooks,
Or *Canajohary*'s echoing cliffs,

* There seems to be no certain account of the permanent settlement of any Indian nation on this river before the Mohawks; although the Hurons, according to Charlevoix, a more ancient and extensive people, had probably visited it.

v. 98. The same Subject continued.

First broke the silence of the wilderness.
The houseless pair, encamping then, unstript
The beech's yellow stem, and cas'd their walls
Of clay, or matted boughs; purloining yet,
Unconscious of their distant arrow's wing,
The squirrel of his life, or pheasant, cloth'd
With dappled feathers to his heels. Then came
Some friend or kinsman, with his toiling wife,
Their quiver'd boys and dog: and huts soon join'd
To huts, had form'd society, and taught,
By stationary life's progressive arts,
Its hard-earn'd comforts. But eternal laws,
Employing man's own vengeance as the means
To bring abortion on his works, forbad.
Some hostile tribe, with carnage unappeas'd,
Lean, wandering, with invidious eyes beheld
Their haunts, and lurk'd in ambush near their huts;
Then fell on them defenceless; in a night

The same Subject continued. v. 116.

Up-rooted all their works, and half their race
Destroy'd. Th' industrious colonists were chas'd,
Unshelter'd, thro' the woods, and left behind
No relic but their scalps. The Mohawks next:
And firm confederate* friends, unus'd to war,

* The Mohawks were driven from Lower-Canada towards the period of Hudson's discovery. They were a tribe of the Iroquois, whose history has been published by Governor Colden. Nothing, perhaps, in the annals of heroism, can exceed the instances recorded of the ardour and intrepidity of their warriors. The Governor has given an animated picture of the old Mohawk in his blanket, overawing, by his presence, the distant tribe in obedience to his nation, and collecting a tribute. How justly the enemy stood in awe of the strength and resolution of these warriors, may be learnt from an instance (it must be confessed a little marvellous), which Charlevoix affirms was attested by the missionaries who were present at the scene. An Iroquois chief and some of his companions being taken, after a bloody action, were devoted to death by the Hurons. They placed them on a sort of stage, and insulting the helpless victims according to their barbarous custom, began the work of torment by searing their naked bodies with fire-brands. The chief stood with a firm countenance, insensible to pain, expostulated with his shrieking companions, and reproached them with unmanly sensibility in their sufferings. His superior strength and constancy served only to increase the fury of his tormentors, till one of the fiends came behind him, and having made a circular incision in his head, tore off the scalp by the hair. He then swooned with the loss of blood, and they quitted the stage, leaving him apparently dead with the rest of the victims. But afterwards recovering his senses, he rose up, seized upon the fire-brands, and drove those who remained

v. 121. The same Subject continued.

And studious of ignoble tillage, lash'd
By fierce oppressors from their homes, traced out
On *Caughnawaga*'s meads, or 'neath *Caroga*'s pines,
Their rude encampments. Hate and dark design,
Tho' stifled, kindling in their vengeful hearts
Infuriate love of arms. Their origin,
And whence their wild fore-fathers stray'd,
No annals tell; whether inclining tow'rd

near him from the scaffold, taking up the ladders to defend himself from their assaults. But his enemies having succeeded in throwing him down, by sticks flung at a distance, they again seized his body, and, rekindling the fire, threw him into the midst of it. But he sprang from the flames, caught up the fire-brands a second time, and, jumping down from the stage, ran into the village, spreading consternation amongst the fugitives, and setting fire to their huts, till at length, overpowered by his enemies, they led him back to the fire, cut off his hands, rolled him in the embers, and then flung his body on the burning stump of a tree. The blood issuing from his arms nearly extinguished the fire: but he continued still alive, and threatened them with revenge, lacerated and half roasted as he was. Creeping on his knees and elbows, his fierce and terrific looks and gestures inspired all around him with fear. The missionaries then thought they might approach him, and make an impression on his proud spirit in his last suffering. But whilst he sat down, and attentively listened to their pious exhortation, one of the demons seized the opportunity, came behind, and struck off his head.

The peaceful ocean, where the sun, at eve,
Upon the *shining mountains* lights his fires,
On *Arathbuscaw*'s hungry shores, and where
The arctic circle girds the piny rocks
And lakes, in vast congeries round them spread;
Or southward from th' illimitable plain
Depastur'd by erratic buffaloes,
Where, hovering round the herds, th' *assinipoils*
Upon their tongues and marrowy haunches feast.
Where'er the roving ancestors were born,
'Twas here their spirited and martial sons
First sung the war-song—here on frequent spots
Which now the dwarfish oak and pine o'erspread,
And where the sumach scatters on the lap
Of autumn, azure-cheek'd, its pinnated
And scarlet leaves, once stood their huts; 'twas here
Their arrows first they sharpen'd, to transfix
The *Adirondac* tyrants, seated round

v. 147. The same Subject continued.

The blanketed and tawny sachems smok'd
In council, or the yelling bands, inspir'd
Like frantic Bacchanals, with fierce grimace,
And gesture fiend-like, beat the war-dance: here,
By Vengeance nursed, they rais'd a flame,
That, from the ocean to *Machibon*'s* gate,
Spread conflagration thro' the woods. The foe,
Unconscious of their strength, secure, remote,
And unsuspecting, till he heard the shrieks
Of savage fury, and the warriors bald,
Besmear'd with ochre, issued from their haunts,
Flinging their brandish'd tomahawks, with eyes
Red as the crouching panther's. None escap'd,
Resisting or resistless, from their blows.
The aged sire struck lifeless on his seat;

* Lake Superior, which the Indian's god, *Machibon*, it was said, formed for his own use. According to their tradition, there was once a large mass of copper at the entrance.

The panting bosom gor'd, that prest the babe
It nourish'd. Devastation swept o'er all
The scene, and stain'd the ruin'd stage with blood.
Rejoicing then, the victors to their vales,
Renown'd for empire, march'd with the acclaim
Of triumph: every proud and valiant hut
Was nailed with bleeding scalps; and tribes remote
Gave tributary homage to the *Wolf*,
*The Turtle and the Bear.** The fosse still marks
Their castle's range, and in the lonely woods,
In hieroglyphics, still remain their boasts
Of conquest and their graves. Next Ceres came,
With German reapers in her train, and strew'd
Her harvests on the furrow'd width of flats.
Prest by her golden sandals, we admire
The soil fructiferous, and scenes drest out

* The arms of the Iroquois.

v. 178. Scoharie Creek—Caughnawaga.

By smiling Industry, that now reigns o'er
The wild demesnes of War. Pursuing west
The sinuating stream within its vales
Of lengthening meadows, insulated oft.
With steep ascent, we reach the rising ground
Of aromatic pines, where, jutting south,
The elevated shore confronting meets
Scoharie's stony creek. The opening hills
Unfold its distant course, far in the blue
And mountainous horizon lost. A rich
And flourishing expanse of vale then leads
Beyond the confluent waters, thro' the meads,
From *Caughnawaga* to a stately ridge
Of mountain granite, pil'd in lofty tiers,
Aerial, strutting in the scene. Here stopp'd
The prospect of our level course——We pause
In contemplation on the massy ribs
Develop'd, that maintain our earthly stage,

Till, length, the opening flats unfold the tower
And shapely roofs of *Palatine*—its plain
And intervening fields with herbage spread,
Or crested corn; while sloping woodlands, topt
With soaring pines, the Mohawk's bushy verge
O'ershadow, and the eye contemplative
In admiration fix. Where is the mind
That honours Truth, and in this transient day
Of perishable Nature, 'mid the scoffs
And turmoil of a selfish world, would still
Preserve serene and animate the brows
Of virtuous sentiment, that does not seek
In rural peace a refuge from its sighs?
What tho' ambition wear a crown—the fangs
Of avarice be fill'd with gold—esteem
And dear-bought wealth enrich the tongue that wins
By syren eloquence; yet happier he,
Whom, in his valleys, ringing with the axe,

The setting sun forsakes, amidst the works
Of growing settlement. Delightful cares!
That, in perspective of the future, charm
Beyond the plaudits of ephemeron praise.
How blest the prospect, to behold, each hour,
Increasing all around, expansive life
And happiness—their rapid progress urg'd
By ardent toil, invigorate by hope!
Tho' none here revel on the silken couch
Of zoneless pleasure, Friendship still may dwell
With Peace and Love, more sweet than is the voice
Of Fame, when from Parnassus she proclaims,
In melodies that vibrate 'twixt heaven
And earth, her hero's actions. But, renew'd
Our journey, we pursue the mountain's stony edge,
Where the *Caroga* issues from the wild
And desert heights, in elevated range
Of sylvan tops far northward stretch'd, and where,

Below, its cataract pours down the hoarse
Canadian creek; till, rising in our front,
The mountains close, where once, perhaps, their rock
In one unbroken chain, the Mohawk's mass
Of waters, o'er the German Flats and plains
Of Herkimer, suspended in a broad
Primeval lake, till, issuing thro' the straits,
Disjointed pass, and roaring granite rocks
The lake descending, left its reedy bounds,
And bed of slime, exhaling to the sun.

The ardent eye of Science, rais'd to views
Oft unrewarding our aspiring search,
(Mere mockery of life!) will pierce the veil
Of wonder-working Nature's schemes profound,
And to our ken the mighty faculties
Half-shown, will dare to think how *He* who reigns
Thro' universal space, with but a look
Glanc'd thro' the fields of ether, might condense

v. 250 The same Subject continued.

From airy Nothing a self-balanc'd world;
First fluid, then digested, crystallized,
Compact, and in concentric foldings grac'd
With vegetable type's prolific dust.*
Led by conjecture, with the ambiguous lamp
Of knowledge, thus we follow back the steps
Of father Time, thro' all his changeable
And wonderous course, till from the gaseous realms
The nascent globe one boiling ocean sprung,
Contorted to its centre, fuming hot
With vapour, through its orbits range. How shook
The trembling poles, when with the impulse rock'd
Of mountain-surges o'er the deep rotund

* The learned have lately indulged themselves in many plausible speculations respecting the formation of the earth. From the wonderful reproductive powers of nature, it would seem co-existent with time, as to the animal and vegetable kingdoms: but in the fossil there seems a decay without any *adequate* renovation. Fortunately the present age is wise enough to reject all systems for the pursuit of facts.

Revolving! then by crystal fetters bound,
Concocting heats and elemental wars
Laid waste the solid mass, and flames and black
Volcanic tempests issued from its sides,
Split by electric peals, until appeas'd,
At length, the wrath chaotic, drest
In hill and vale, the fair terraqueous orb
Harmonious, on its axis turning, smil'd
Upon the azure heaven. Thus we pass
In rumination by the shadowy rocks
That on the Mohawk's narrow'd borders frown—
A ragged pavement coasts the basement's edge,
Strew'd by the ruins of the hoary heights.
And now the airy Flats* we pass, their church,
Litigious hall, and taverns, and approach
The gloomy shade of dark continuous wood,

* German Flats Town.

That runs high westward to the Mohawk's fount.
Unbroken here the waste—half-settled here
The towering trees on new-born fields recline—
Disorder'd, hewn, the venerable stems
And branching limbs surround their parent trunks,
That in the blackening conflagration still
Survive, and to the scythe of Time alone,
That levels all things, yield: a sturdy few
Yet standing, girdled by the fatal knife,
In slow destruction waste, upon their sprays
And airy summits quench'd the vital lymph;
In wintry desolation group'd, they pine
Midst summer's genial solstice. Thriving near,
Their comrades flourish; tall, columnar *bass*,
With fluted shafts aspiring; *oaks* that stretch
Their vigorous arms; the *hemlock*, sombre-topt;
The yellow *birch*, her silken boddice half
Unlac'd; and *maple*, delicately seam'd.

Athwart the solemn woods, of vast extent,
Stem beyond stem, in series infinite,
With vaulting foliage shadowed as we pass,
The lively sun oft darts his influence;
And, midst the humid trees, an open square,
The hospitable roof of logs rough hewn,
Excorticate reveals. Aside, empal'd,
The garden flourishes with roseate flowers;
And at the door the children gambol near;
Their lily-featur'd mother still intent
On busy cares domestic; while the sire
Along the echoing causeway drives his kine,
Or plies his axe far sounding.
Thus, beloved
And happy scenes! a pensive wanderer,
I have trod your wilds, enamoured much
Of Nature in her simplest guise, tho' sunk
At heart, and anxious to forsake the world

v. 315. Conclusion.

And all its vain, deceitful blandishments.
When these solicitous and weary eyes
Are clos'd thro' many a summer's reign, your vales
Shall flourish, each succeeding year shall yield
New stores of wealth, and future ages bless
The works, the zeal, the wisdom of the past.

OCTOBER.

ARGUMENT.

The Dawn of Day and Sunrise—Peculiar Character of the Scenery in the Vicinity of the City of New-York—Description of a Salt-Marsh—A Wood—Corn Fields at the Time of Harvest—Buckwheat Field—The first Settlers—A Farm-House on the Shore—Calmness generally preceding a Change of Weather—Distant View of the City—Epidemic Sickness.

OCTOBER.*

How mild and grateful is the dawn of day,
When, stealing thro' the white, reposing fogs,
October's sun insinuates its beams!
The west, untainted with the vapourish night,
And beaming in the blue horizon, breathes
A crystal gale from Erie's† limpid tide,
Or from Superior's ample depths exhal'd.
The pure aerial spirit moves at first
In whispers thro' the crested corn, and waves
The pines upon the distant rocks, then skims

* Two poems, under the titles of this and the following, were published by the author some years ago.

† This lake, according to Charlevoix, derives its name from a tribe of Hurons once inhabiting its banks. *Erie*, in the Indian language, signifies a cat.

The fluctuating water, as the morn,
Rejoicing in the farthest heaven, unveils
The glistening meadows and the roving mists,
Condens'd, precipitated, clinging round
The distant hills, whose summits, unobscur'd,
In variegated yellow richly clad,
Rise 'mid the lustre of th' autumnal sky.
And now the whole perspective opening
Thro' its extent, discovers a serene
And boundless day. Thro' every nerve,
Inspir'd with animation, in the pathless field
I stroll delighted; and, above the vale,
Pause on the rising hill, whose hoary rocks,
With creeping briar and crested sumach spread,
And scented with the cedar's spicy breath,
O'erlook the scene. 'Tis here, while Nature smiles
In her autumnal charms, and placid skies
Reflect their mild complacence on my soul—

While, teeming with increase, the fragrant earth
Her rich profusion yields, that I would tempt
The poet's imitative song. What though
No finish'd culture has adorn'd the fields
With living hedge-rows, no laborious care
Drawn off the rancid waters, or reliev'd
The glebe from wrecks of lacerated rocks;
The ruder grace of Nature, unsubdued,
Prevailing oft amid the furrow'd scene—
Contrasted charms! the wild attire of grass—
The desert wood-lands, whose uneven growth,
Half rail'd, half fringed with thickets, circumscribes
The toiling husbandman—the auburn groves,
With yellow chesnut ting'd and scarlet oak,
Or interspers'd with ever-verdant pines.
The charms of Nature, with perception fine
Of all her fairest traits, illustrious bards
Have sung, and themes so trite have lost their force.

Though here the wild appropriate grace
That marks a landscape gravid with the wealth
Of future years, the blended charms of land,
And sea, and skies autumnal, might inspire
My numbers, if Columbia, more intent
On interesting labours that promote her high
And amiable prosperity, would hear.
Along the banks of the Champaign saline,
Strong-scented, on its margin set with tufts
Of grass or feather'd reeds, I wander on
Beside the fading hickory or fir
That overlooks a shrubbery below
Of swampy beech, the laurel flowering white,
And thicket mantled with the various growth
Of vines and rose-briars. In their early flight,
Towards the creek or muddy sedge, the ducks
Oft coast along the wood; and snowy gulls,
Upon the liquid ocean of the blue

v. 65. A Wood.

Serene, impending sail, or sometimes plunge
Precipitate upon their watery prey.
Refreshing odours animate the breath
Of morn; and all is fair tranquillity.
Towards the wood my devious steps incline,
Where, strewn with leaves and shadowy, the path
Winds thro'. Far off the woodman's stroke, or voice
Within of shouting waggoner, resounds.
Before me, with promiscuous intercourse
Of trees, the prospect terminates in shade,
And a long series of decreasing stems,
Their limbs invested with autumnal garb;
Save where, in stately solitude, the oak
Exalts his venerable arms, leafless
With years, and whitening in the last decay;
Or, save where, in unfrequent interstice,
Thro' the broken foliage, which the sun-beams
Gilds with liveliest border, intervenes

A prospect of ethereal azure.
And now the cultured landscape opens round:
On this side, from its load of shadowy stems
And tangled covert free, the soil inhales
A genial warmth of day, and, redolent
With crops in full autumnal bearing, glows.
Investing half the prospect, from the wood
And thorny brakes, with knotty rails fenc'd off,
The corn-field stretches o'er the vale, and up
The undulating hill's irriguous base:
Luxuriant, spreading wide with ample leaves,
It waves and rustles in th' inconstant wind.
Sprung from the dog-star's blaze and mighty heat,
The plants, long nourish'd in the black parterres,
Mature for harvest stand, with yellow ears
Inwove with beads. The tufts first taken off,
And near the home-stall heap'd, in swampy yards,
By cloven feet impress'd, the labourers move

From row to row, and gather from the stems,
Shorn of their crests, the silk-envelop'd ears.
One stoops amongst the tawny blades, and strips
The pod; another, sable-fac'd and slow,
Bears on the loaded pannier to his teem
Of ruminating oxen near at hand,
And through the echoing shades the loaded wain
Drives creeking on its miry wheels; while swift
Before him fly the conscious thieves, their prey
Deserted for the sheltering wood, but yet
Reluctant, and intent on future spoil:
Loquacious black-birds in the sunny brake
Thick settling, and the squirrel, thro' the leaves,
Wing-footed, springing on the lofty stem.
Beyond, and waiting for the tardy scythe,
The buckwheat, spread along the airy slope,
And basking in the south, invests the hill's
Expanding waist; its white and honey'd bloom

Succeeded by the russet colour'd pod.
Beneath the sapphire sky it glows, and long
Delights the timid quail that crouch unseen
Amidst the scarlet stalks, or round some stump
Lie nestled, till the scythe, at length, reveals
Their haunts, and strews upon the arid earth
A withering crop of seed. Collected thence
(Ere chill November whistle in the stems)
Upon a central platform, by the hinds
Hard trodden from its husk, the precious grain
Is winnow'd by the heaps of useless straw.

When Hudson, with his briny crew, had turn'd
Yon *Straits*,* and first the azure Bay beheld,
Upon its verge the fort and lofty fanes
Rise intermingled with *Manhattan*'s trees,
A band of enterprising brethren, led

* Alluding to the Narrows at the entrance of the harbour of New-York.

v. 135. The same Subject continued.

By purer lights of heaven in the quest
Of fortune, though remote, o'ertaken oft
By strong pursuers, fix'd upon the shore
Their humble dwellings; and some wand'rers then
From Haerlem's dykes, or the ensanguin'd Rhine,
First turn'd the glebe on yonder slopes, and strew'd
The desert beach with timber, while the groupes
Of natives, paddling up the Hudson, left
Their shells and half-extinguish'd fires. Severe
And cheerless was their lot—unsheltered long—
The vast untrodden region laying yet
Behind their tents in listening silence, damp,
And echoing to the axe. Remembrance, then,
Of milder scenes, and home with comfort blest,
Came stealing o'er their manly hearts; of home,
By Resolution's hard decree cast off,
And left behind th' immeasurable arc
Of Ocean's waters. Still unfetter'd Faith

And smiling Freedom at her elbow urg'd
Their vigorous labours, till the pregnant soil,
Expanding to the day its varied length
Of hill and dale, the lively face assum'd
Of husbandry. Exotic crops of grain
Rejoic'd upon the plains—the orchards hung
Rich, studded with their pippins—in the meads,
Shorn of their hay, the yellow-breasted larks
Melodious sung—and, smoaking on his stoop,
Fann'd by the summer's breeze, the wealthy heir
Saw numerous flocks depasturing in his fields—
The sheep, and hogs curl-tail'd, and tawny kine.
Hence is the progeny inhabiting
The level shores, that, when th' embattled point
Salutes the setting sun, ring echoes: Hence
The house-wives, in deep bonnets veil'd, and hinds,
Who, in blue vests and trowsers, stately-pac'd,
To early market bear from their canoes

v. 171. A Farm-House on the Shore.

The fragrant greens and dairy's milky stores.
—Such too inhabit here. Behind a cape
Whose ruin'd brows project upon the strand,
Obnoxious to the winter's spray, their farm
Lies screen'd. Its tenements and dock,
With boat twin-masted leaning on its side,
Announce the mansion's scite; and, in the rear,
Receding from the angry west, appears
The low Batavian pile of stones white-seam'd.
In front, beyond the sandy shore, extends
A range of meadow, cloven in parterres
By sedgy ditches, and the creek that winds,
Shell-strewn, its muddy passage to the dock.
Tho' swans, with white and stately necks, sail not
Along the humble vales, the seasons send
Their wildest wanderers: the secret snipe,
That on the borders of the slimy field
Sucks up its draining juice—the bittern slunk

Calmness generally preceding a change of Weather. v. 189.

Amongst the sedge—and lonely hern, that waits
His prey, oft stranded by th' insidious ebb.
Attemper'd by the chaste cerulean air,
The noon looks mild, and all the bay
Is calm and blended with the limpid sky
In one transparent sheet of light. Beside
The looming shore, the fishermen, distinct
At anchor, lift into their boats the net,
With sea-weed interwoven; while the air
Elastic rings around, with sounds remote
Of laughter-hearted slaves, and converse loud
Oft mingling with the *blue-bill*'s choral notes,
That float and gambol on the flats, or skim
Along the margin of the deep serene;
Reflecting far *Manhattan*'s* stationed ships,

* The name of New-York island taken for that of the city.

The description of a storm has been here obliterated, as most of the images were trite, and apparently imitations of Thomson, or rather of the first book of Virgil's Georgics, l. 356, &c. for Thomson, so often finely original himself, seems

v. 204. Distant View of the City.—Indication of foul Weather.

Red fronts and edifices swelling high,
In storied height of roofs o'ertopping roofs.
O fav'rite city, much in opulence and strength
Grown eminent, since first upon the bay
I saw thy smoke o'er modest roofs ascend!
The voice of War was hush'd, and on thy shore
Meek-ey'd Humility and injur'd Truth,
Tho' rent with many a bleeding wound, reposed,
Content in Freedom. Now, within the warmth
Of thy beloved and hospitable sphere,
The Muse would seek reception—for the west,
In crimson steept, forebodes the destin'd frown
Of ever-changing Nature. But, alas!
Th' afflicted eye hails not afar th' abode

indebted to Virgil for almost all the prognostics of a storm, mentioned from l. 119 to 152, in his Winter. I cannot help expressing my admiration, not only of the finished style, but of the unparalleled precision, and truth of description, remarkable in that passage of the Roman poet, to which Thomson, I think, appears inferior, not so much in language as in observation of nature.

Of wonted Peace and Happiness. No more
Along thy shores the frequent sails strive to
And fro: the busy roads no more wheel in
The riches of the distant fields: the din
Of Commerce round thy harbour is unheard:
But Death, by stifled Putrefaction fed,
O'erhangs thy mourning steeples, pointing thro'
The streets his unrelenting arrows, steept
In yellow poison——Shrieking falls the child:
The father, drooping o'er with agony,
Inhales his pestilential breath. Beneath
The paralytic gripe of anguish sunk,
The strong, imploring with the feeble, lie;
And the survivors, hurrying from the scene
Of Death, in consternation seek the fields.
In dull deploring idleness remain
Their hush'd abodes, and stores, and vacant shops.
Throughout the city's void alone is heard

v. 236. Burial of the dead.

The sudden shriek of agonizing pain,
Or sullen step attending on the sick,
Or tide that ripples by the silent dock;
While in the vacant market-place Despair
Sits musing on the solemn scene of woe.
As Night succeeds, the leaden-footed Day
No pompous mourning obsequies performs
At the untimely grave. Processions, spun
Behind the black-invested bier, move not
With slow, funereal pace; while in their still
And regular approach, the frequent knell,
Bursting from the sounding belfry, vibrates
On the thrill'd ear at solemn intervals.
But oft, where melancholy matrons keep
Their vigils o'er the jaundiced corpse, the hearse
Comes echoing thro' the lonely streets, and bears
Its load, unhonour'd, to a distant grave.—
—But let the Muse no longer on the scene

Of tears desponding dwell. As human joys,
So woes must have an end affix'd. The North,
That slumbers on the icy Pole, shall soon
Chastise the lazy atmosphere, and raise
The gasping victims of disease to life
And crystal health and happiness, which still,
As the magnificent and radiant sun
That melts the tempest, will predominate
In this too anxious life's obscurest day.

DECEMBER.

ARGUMENT.

Change of Season—A Snow-Storm—Pleasures of the City, and its Occupations—The State Legislature—Courts of Law—Anniversary Dinner—A Ball.

DECEMBER.

FAIR Autumn's lucid sun has set, and slow
O'ershadowing the azure sight of heaven,
The sad north-east, in squalls, impassion'd breathes,
Dark with Canadian clouds, beneath whose frown
Flies a light mist, precipitate and wild,
Till soon the whole tempestuous store let loose,
Descends in snow. Stript of their leaves, the woods
Which lately charm'd the eye, in the white waste
Embedded, whistle to the dreary gale
That brings down winter o'er their heads. Inert
And trackless desolation fills at once
The world's revolving stage. How pleasing then
The city's smoke and social sphere, replete
With life and ever-loved variety!

Nor there unwelcome is the night that shrouds
The country wide with snow, while in the morn
The lively sound of bells proclaims the sleighs
And horses trampling on the powder'd soil.
All hasten to their cars; and scarce the sun
Eyes the wan earth askance, ere, glancing to
And fro, they pass, in rapid flight, a mix'd
And motley-featured throng. The merchant cool,
With calculating brow—the merry tars,
That, fiddling, cleave the wind, and strive in song
With Æolus—the beau, in shagg'd surtout,
Curbing, with mien erect, his fretful steeds—
And lily faces peeping from their muffs,
That shield their whiteness from the rosy gale.
Forth to the country's waste they fly, or coast
Along the river's livid shore, but soon
Glide back towards the lively streets, that, ere
The noontide splendour quits them, reappear

In ruddy footways drest, and pavements rough
With fractured stones silicious. On the wharves
And crowded scenes of business, meanwhile,
The snow heap'd up, and stain'd with mire, obstructs
The active passage. Hogsheads gliding forth
To bawling vendues, and the loaded drays,
Are at a pause. Impatient of delay,
The passengers press forward, some to bid,
And some to nick a bargain on the 'change;
The usurer to chain upon the frail
Distrest increasing gains, and broker true
To an appointment as percentage. Who hears
The keen north-western blast, or shudders at
The sleet of winter, while, in active search
Of gain, he mingles in the crowded hall
Of Commerce, buzzing with the talk of stocks,
And lands, and contracts, from a thousand tongues!
It is the ever active spirit's dreams

And social sympathy, encircling all
With a benign embrace, that warms the heart.
He seeks it, galloping to town, who leaves
Behind his mansion to the season bleak,
And tempest, shaken as th' unshelter'd oak
Upon Ontario's clay-built promontory—
Tho' in his hot-house green exotics smile
Upon the leafless garden—though his saloon
Is richly carpeted, and pictured round
With deeds of arms or love, and on his hearth
The radiant hickory revives the spring.
The rural senators, the travellers chill'd,
And speculators, nestle all in town—
In town, where dwell, united, social bliss
And sensual, comfort, knowledge, genius, taste,
And wealth, that pampers them, wherever new
And varied occupations stir the hive
Of Industry, and all the ardent race engage

In fresh pursuit—directed these
By Speculation's nice discernment—those
By toil assiduous. Here, where'er you turn,
The sluggish fancy's rous'd by windows bright,
With neatest works metallic, or hung out
In motley-colour'd show of stuffs and silks:
While Avarice, with her seducing charms,
Inspirits all the throng, from him whose stores
Are pil'd with Britain's woven merchandize,
Or fragrant teas of China, to the hag
That, near some windy corner shivering, sits
In doleful contemplation on her wares
Of nuts, and fruit, and treacle-garnish'd cakes.

While now the sturdy swain, within his barn,
Plies the smooth flail, amidst a turbid cloud
Of husks that issue glistening from the door;
Or with his empty panniers o'er the bay
Sails windward, pitching to the fretful shore;

More weighty occupations in the town
Consume the morning pregnant with affairs.
Discoursing on the vestibule of steps,
A crowd invites into the imperial hall
Of legislation; and, arrang'd within,
The members, big with weighty schemes of state,
Deliberating on the subjects of the day,
And note each point of argument, their guide
Profest—a science that on eagle wings
Descries a nation's multifarious wants
With sight expatiate, clear, that fain would scan
The strangely complicated creature man,
And rule his changeable, mysterious heart,
By slight and fleeting circumstances turn'd,
A seeming paradox; but constant still,
And true to polar Nature in each nice
Vibration, as the needle trembling o'er
The magnet. How profound in theory!

v. 105. The same Subject continued.

In practice how capricious, if the mean
Presiding individual should exalt
His apish wants upon the public weal!
—The Speaker opens the concerns of state,
And in debate confronted champions hold
The field of argument with reasonings *pro*
And *con*, while the attentive throng without
Hangs on each speaker's lips. This orator,
With lofty diction, courts the listening ears
To learn his purpose—" 'Ts a cause in which
You all are deeply interested, all
Involv'd;" and on its issue would suspend
Our lives: while his opponent's logic, coarse
And specious, snares the boorish intellect
With propositions "broad and palpable—
To waking senses plain, self-evident."
Another's efforts lurk in sly intrigue,
The true and secret motives well observ'd,

And thro' the twisted skein of covert views,
Perplexing views, insinuates a thread
Uniting them, and weaves a shrewd design.
One patriot, warm with ostentatious zeal
(For his constituents printed on a choice
For Congress now conferring), every scheme
Upon their purses, stern as Cato, spurns;
While he who from the humid woods, thro' mud
And nervous roots, unhors'd, has wrought his way
O'er mountains to th' assembly, drafts the plan,
And pleads a road-act to th' unlist'ning house,
With energy that no expense controuls.
—The languid sense of duty, public good,
In vain would guide these pilots in a sea
Of doubt and casuistic sophistry,
Who hold the helm of state, when meteors false,
Of hope and private feeling, thwart their course.
All Satire's blunt, convincing, forceful words,

In vain affront the purposes well aim'd,
By disingenuous heads and state address.
Yet while its wheels subordinate are warp'd
By opposite impressions, the machine
Of state proceeds in just direction on.
  But if the legislators, in a field
So vast, by optics frail are oft misled,
The venerable judges sitting near,
On a tribunal raised and overthroned
By Justice, with her equal scales, can read
Their duty in the book of law, in old
Sagacious Saxon text declar'd, chastis'd,
Illuminated by a thousand years
Experience. Nice discrimination here,
And upright learning, ponder on the case
Ambiguous; while subtile tongues of sly
And disingenuous advocates contend,
And ravelling Suspicion's puzzled clew,

Within the labyrinth of doubt conceal
The traitor Fraud. But wits as sharp opposed
To wits, untwist the guileful arguments,
And lend their venal optics to the search
Of truth. Commercial dealings intricate,
Oppressive torts, and dubious freehold rights,
In Gothic phrase and jurisprudence laced,
The jurors' minds attentive occupy
By turns, and all the pleaders' slippery art
Employ. Presiding Sense, how dignified,
That, with an eye undazzled, can behold
The splendid light of sophistry, and trace
The steady line of right upon a scheme
Of subtile intricacy, that confounds
The swimming eyes of laymen, feeling much
And anxious for the truth! The task
Were bright indeed; and, by the glowing love
Of all who weep o'er human nature prized,

v. 177. Reflection.

If universal justice could dethrone a vain
And narrow science (suiting but too well,
Alas, our feeble state!) which governs all
By one unbending rule—Convenience then
Should quit the helm of right, and Property,
That leaves unclothed the venerable limbs
Of suffering Virtue, to adorn the brows
Of Birth or Folly with her richest gems,
That from the poor, full oft, and generous
In spirit, takes to feed th' insatiate lust
Of Avarice, and of dishonest gain
Enamour'd, scoffs at tatter'd Probity,
With cheeks entrench'd by a deriding world.
—But such are themes for *Satire*, and I leave
Her lash to more determined wrists; tho' who
Can see this happy life so often marr'd
By selfishness, and sigh not to unhorse
The lubber Influence!—But ah! if yet

Humility and true fraternal love,
By an example urged from heaven, remain
Unvalued, need the muse presume to raise
Her feeble voice in so sublime a cause?
Now, in the reddening descent of day,
The merchant ponders o'er his active schemes
Of traffic, money-changers lock their tills,
And carts lay by unhorsed; while vesper bells
Invite the meek, with holy music, to forget,
In sight of Heaven, their sublunary tears,
Or tolling o'er the shrouded dead, awake
Their native hills to melancholy echoes.
But less neglected calls of Joy, meantime,
Engage the wearied sons of business,
And renovate exhausted nature. Perhaps
Some annual feast, a warm, fraternal band,
In patriotic league, invites to cheer
The day with symphony and wine. The board,

v. 213. The same Subject continued.

With dainties spread, has muster'd at the hour
A smiling throng; and, anxious to partake
Of all the season's riches, they sit round
With earnest eyes. Before the chair of state,
A soup, exhaling with quintescence hot
Of flesh and vegetation, first attracts
The talking guests, with palates yet untuned:
Below, the turkey, sausage-fed, expands
Its swelling chest, that whitens on the knife:
And, fronting it, the haunch of sylvan deer,
Stopt in his flight across the thymy plains,
Or, browsing, pierc'd by lead invisible.
Aside, twin ducks a savoury sage exhale;
And, nested in the spicy paste, repose
The timid quail, that lately from their haunts
In trepidation scar'd, sulphureous hail
Pursuing, in the eager flight brought down,
Yet fluttering with the agonies of death.

Beside them roost upon th' ensanguin'd toast,
With beaks suicidal, transfix'd and trussed,
The snipes itinerant, by moonlight route,
Far from Canadian swamps aërial borne
Fugacious, chased by hyperborean snows,
Now served upon their bier, and soon embalm'd
With purple Bordeaux, or Madeira ripe,
To mellow topaz-colour'd juice refin'd.
The smoky kitchen's stores exhausted, next
Pomona comes to scatter on the board
Her loitering fruits, that with the ardent grapes
Fermented juices blend their fragrance, striped
With searing red nectareous Spitzenberg,
And with its vestment yellow as at eve
Th' autumnal west, the Newtown pippin dropt
With corrosive purple.—But the desires
Of appetite appeased, the table rings
With talk convivial and the sprightly laugh;

v. 249. The same Subject continued.

And as the bottle circles by degrees,
'Tis friendship all and joy. The crimson cheek
Now flushes with a finer warmth—the eye
Swims in delight; while some inspiring voice,
With strains of merriment and toping tales,
Calls forth the jocund sallies of applause;
Or, warbling a melodious elegy,
Awakes each tender, generous sentiment.
But as the summer's sun, that from the east
Beams forth benign, and in his limpid course
Ascending, brightens into ardent day,
Then sits in thunder and a night of clouds;
So the infatuating charm, at first
Diffusing a sweet influence o'er the soul,
And kindling into ecstacies, is lost,
Whelm'd in the boiling phrenzy of the mind.
The members more discreet betimes retir'd,
A staunch and Bacchanalian few survive,

When calm discourse and animated wit
Yield to a wild vociferous jargon,
And, drowning every lay, alone is heard
The chorus hoarse in discord clamorous.
Before their sight the glimmering objects wheel
In sickening rounds; the hollow ears with sounds
Buzz indistinct; and the head simpering nods
With listless inclination, or by fits
Resign'd to brooding impotence, it sinks
A sullen, senseless, pitiable load.
But let us leave the sorry few, who, in
An age so boasted and so wise as this,
Can barter for empoison'd bliss the mind's
Exalted faculties.—The chaster sex,
Meantime, by Taste and Delicacy led,
To scenes of pleasure more refin'd repair.
For these the hours of many a previous morn
In nice and studious preparation spent;

v. 285. A Ball.

New fashions con'd, and from the litter'd shop
The spangled decorations wrought, to grace
What Nature, summoning her utmost skill
To charm the eye, has form'd most beautiful.
—Then spread o'er all the collied* firmament,
When night presides, borne thro' the trembling streets
In chariots wing'd with lamps, they pass towards
Th' illumin'd hall where heav'n-taught music breathes
In full harmonious concert, or the dance,
In spirited accompaniment, unites
Their graceful feet, subdued the liveliness
Of joyous Nature to a movement gay
And regular. Throughout the brilliant scene,
In every countenance the light of joy

* This word (a derivation from *coal*, signifying *coal-blacked*) is used upon the authority, and from a natural allusion of the subject to a passage of Shakspeare, who, speaking of love, calls it

"Brief as the lightning in the collied night."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Is kindled. Vibrating, the floor responds,
And all the dome with repercussion shakes
Its panell'd sides. Unheeded in the glow
Of silks and interchange of smiles, the night
Flies on, until, at length, the table spread
Below, demands them to its flowering sweets.
All that nectareous summer's light invests
With painted beauty, or the golden smiles
Of autumn melt to sweetness, lies inlaid
With either India's stores. There mingling round,
The splendid guests with wit and festive glee
And converse harmonize, till the dim lights
Perceive the Morn awakening in the east.
—Such are the charms of Winter's life, deck'd out
By meretricious Pleasure! Yet how wise
And happy are the few, in tranquil homes
And rural solitude, whose hearts shrink not
Amidst the howling wilderness around,

v. 317. The same Subject continued.

But, like the verdant, aromatic pines,
Eternal health and vegetation wear!
Imperial Cæsar, though he gave his soul
To vain ambition, was of such a stamp;
And such the hero, to a prouder fame
Consign'd by Virtue, who Mount Vernon's hall
And the Potowmac's airy shore prefers*
To all things but his country's happiness.
For minds of such a stamp, tho' cloudless, still
If steep'd in the polluting breath of throngs
And smoking cities, ever seek the pure
And still sublimity of Nature's scenes,
That contemplation fix beyond the works
Of feeble art, and the unwearied sense
Inspire, refreshen with a charm unsearch'd
Of reason, but expressing most the smile

* This poem was first published during the life of General Washington.

And features of a present deity.
The azure robe of heaven investing wide
High ether's firmament, the snowy earth
That glitters with unnumber'd sparks of light,
As poignant as the diamond's that illumes
Lucinda's breast, insensate multitudes
Unnotic'd leave for filth and crowded shops,
And motley-fronted roofs o'ershadowing half
The face of day, and shrinking from long nights
And rural blasts, forget that nature still
(Though books, domestic friends, or arts refin'd
And occupations fail) inspires who love
To gaze, with Contemplation's placid eye,
Upon the silver orb of the full moon,
As she rides in her serenest zenith
Amid the stately solitude of heaven,
And on the glossy snow reflects a soft
And silken lustre; or upon the north,

v. 351. Morning.—Conclusion.

The gelid seat of Winter's icy throne,
When streams of dawning light, ascending wide,
Diffuse along the painted firmament
Their crimson glories; an untimely morn,
Beauteous, glowing and diversified,
High traversing th' illumin'd vault, and lost
In blooming course amongst the pallid stars.
—'Tis here the human mind, uprais'd,
And conscious of its high descent, by Faith
And stedfast Virtue elevated far
Beyond the lying hope's perennial cares,
The pride besmear'd, the childish vanities,
The hate, the toil and vacancy of life,
Descries a scene in bright repose, where Truth,
And Peace, and Happiness eternal reign.

THE END.

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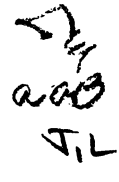

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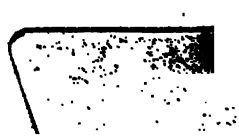
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